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ABSTRACT

The classroom practices described in the 12 articles in this publication reflect much of the current thinking about the teaching of composition skills. Titles of articles are: "What Can Be Done about Composition?" "Junior High School Foundations for Expository Composition," "Teaching Sentence Combining," "Prevision and Revision in Tenth-Grade English Classes," "Structuring without Stifling," "What Can I Say about My Subject?" "Hows and Whys and Whats: Some Thoughts about Constructing Topic Sentences," "Marking to Teach Composition," "Composition Assignment: Autobiographical Portrait," "Values and Creativity in Composing," "Focus on Film," and "Individualized Instruction of Composition." (JM)

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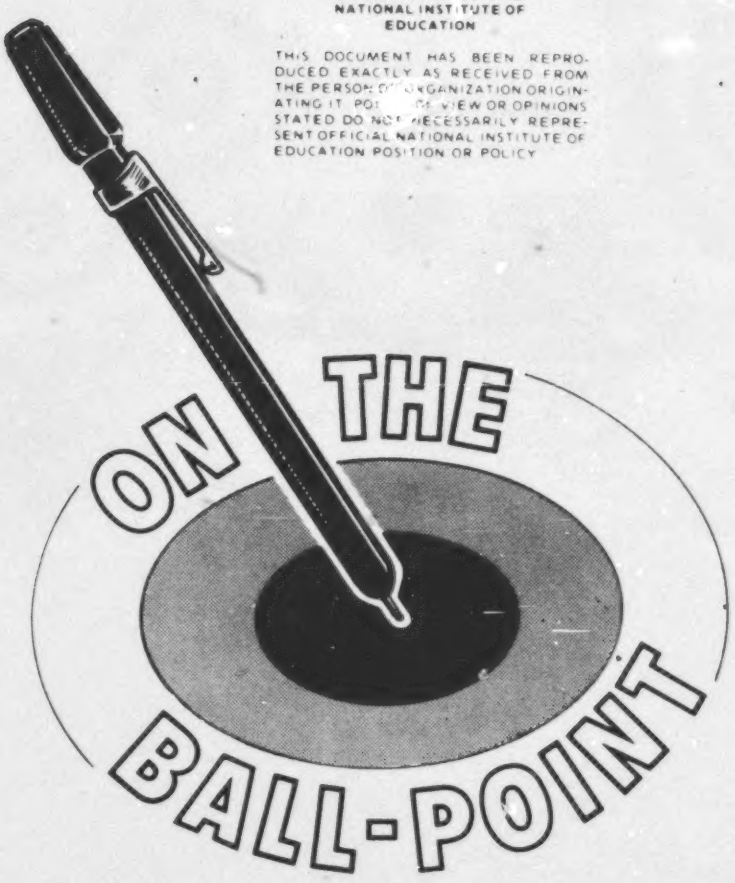

CLASSROOM PRACTICES IN TEACHING COMPOSITION

Los Angeles City Schools
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Publication No. SC-743 · 1976

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FOREWORD

This publication is an outgrowth of the Practicum on Teaching Composition, a program presented by the English Council of Los Angeles and the Instructional Planning Division at Emerson Junior High School on January 31, 1976. The practicum included 21 small-group sessions on various topics related to composition instruction, led by experienced teachers from Los Angeles junior and senior high schools. Many teachers who attended the individual sessions were enthusiastic about the concepts and strategies of the group leaders. At the suggestion of these participants, the Division invited leaders to write articles based on their presentations so that their ideas might reach a wider audience.

The classroom practices described in this publication reflect much of the current thinking related to the teaching of composing skills to young people. Although individual articles may concentrate on a single composing problem, each author's exposition implies the growing recognition of the need to attend to all aspects of the composing process: Getting concrete impressions; exploring alternative ideas; acquiring the vocabulary and syntactical fluency for expressing one's thoughts; considering one's purpose and audience and then assuming an appropriate voice; determining a suitable mode or form for one's communication; and expressing one's message according to the available patterns of sentence structure and paragraph development, obtaining feedback and tentative evaluation from sources that include one's peers as well as one's teacher. Teachers who have incorporated similar practices into their classrooms verify the soundness of the underlying concepts and the success of their students' efforts.

The Division gratefully acknowledges the work of the teachers who have contributed to this publication and to the teaching of composition in our schools. Appreciation is also extended to the 1975-76 officers of the English Council of Los Angeles, who planned and co-sponsored the practicum:

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WHAT CAN BE DONE ABOUT COMPOSITION?

Nancy S. McHugh, Chatsworth High School, Area L

The recent furor over student writing is bringing into focus a great many concepts about composition. This article deals with just a few of the considerations that may help teachers to evolve a philosophy and a program for encouraging and improving student writing. Each teacher needs to read the professional journals, attend the training sessions, listen to colleagues, and then synthesize all the resulting ideas into a system that works for that teacher, in line with the requirements of school, community, and students.

One thing that works is practice--experience in writing. Most studies converge on this point, and the proof goes back as far as a British study of 10 years ago: Students who merely wrote extensively, without correction, improved over peers who read and wrote and over peers who wrote and had their papers corrected. Various types of writing notebooks provide the impetus and the vehicle for student writing. Some are very structured, such as model and copy books and practice exercises; others, such as journals, are for free expression. Teachers should check and read these extra writing efforts, but they need not and perhaps should not mark them.

MOTIVATION

Motivation is another facet of writing for which there are many suggestions; in fact, much of the current advice about teaching writing suggests devices and techniques for motivating students. In the last analysis, motivation must be handled according to the individual plan of the individual teacher, based on that teacher's own purpose and creativity. But there are many concrete suggestions that work: Short films (10 to 30 minutes) that stimulate discussion and even argument can lead directly to student writing or, through group discussion, to personal writing or exposition. Teachers have always used field trips, stories, games, and pictures as stimuli. In the past several years, theater games and role-playing have been used increasingly for prewriting motivation. Books on these exercises, like Viola Spolin's Theater Games, can help the inexperienced teacher. Reading aloud to students at all levels is still an effective motivator, and one that students enjoy tremendously.

There are also techniques that work in the actual writing process. One is to allow students to write together as partners; Two students produce one manuscript. Students find such coauthorship interesting and instructive; they learn from one another. Teachers may want to pair good writers with less-good writers, but such manipulation is really not necessary for the process to work well in building self-confidence and encouraging students to examine what they are writing as they write, to "hear" the words, to see direction in writing, and to revise on the spot--all attributes of "good" student writers.

Another technique is to encourage sentence modification, first by exercises shared with the class and then by a system of rewards: Extra credit or praise given for beginning and ending sentences that incorporate the sentence models shows that the student has learned from them. While such practice may be part of prewriting instruction, it also works very well in the middle of a writing assignment. Research (Bateman and Zidonis, Mellon, O'Hare, Stotsky, O'Donnell and Smith) indicates that exercises in sentence manipulation do improve the quality of student writing. Francis Christensen's sentence accumulation exercises are still very valuable learnings for students. They must be modified, of course, according to the levels of maturity and performance of the students involved. Such exercises appeal to students and therefore increase learning aptitude. Using models (especially student models done on the spot) of these sentences and even of paragraphs and entire themes is an aid to students during the writing process. These can be presented by opaque projection, by use of the chalkboard, by circulation of papers, and by teacher or student reading of examples.

PEER EVALUATION

Another large area of current research and reporting is peer evaluation. Writing for the group increases motivation, sense of audience, and interest in proofreading and craftsmanship, and in general assures a better attitude toward writing and a better finished product. One aspect of this process is training students to be readers, just as teachers are taught to be readers of advanced placement or English equivalency tests. One such process involves having the students write on an assigned topic, giving them the rubric used to score the papers, having them apply the rubric to a set of sample papers that have been scored by experienced readers, and then having the students score papers from their own class (names removed). The follow-up might be either revision of the papers or doing a similar assignment and assessing the improvement. Students report that such experience (this sort of operation takes place in many writing laboratories) helps them to "see" what sort of writing is successful and how to produce acceptable writing in terms of organization, tone, paragraph development, and observance of conventions.

HANDLING THE PAPER LOAD

One of the largest problems is, of course, managing the paper load so that the teacher has strength, enthusiasm, and time left for planning, encouraging students, and renewing himself or herself. The use of journals, writing notebooks, and writing folders enables teachers to encourage a great deal of student writing, both structured and "free," that does not have to be marked or graded. When teachers are freed from the burden of judging, they can both read student writing quickly and enjoy it! Students and teachers alike can decide on a plan for evaluating work, perhaps agreeing that one out of three papers with similar topics or forms will be selected for grading.

Writing projects offer a framework for a number of different kinds of writing, the frame providing motivation; continuity, and the necessity for

attention to detail, content, tone, and audience. For instance, one might set up an imaginary town and then do a series of themes dealing with the people in the town, the town itself, and rules, events, and problems within it. History, reasons for behavior, government--all these provide material for analysis, exposition, and practical writing assignments. Another frame might be a newspaper based on a novel or a series of readings.

In such projects, specific assignments could be graded or the whole project read and graded without a great deal of marking for mechanics or specifics. Pre-vision and re-vision in small groups and as a total class help students to focus on assignments and prepare finished copy. When students write for audiences other than the teacher and when they learn to do their own proof-reading, the teacher has less to mark and comment upon; and students write better and receive better grades. There is less frustration all the way around.

Two other concepts are important in writing. One is that teachers can and must share a great deal with students and with colleagues. Teachers must write with students to refine their topics and instructions, to appreciate students' difficulties, and to experience the rewards of writing. They must share ideas and motivating devices and cooperate in assessing students' needs. English departments in which teachers share and cooperate can produce exciting, creative approaches to composition. It is also important that students be rewarded for writing so thay they want to write more. Success breeds more success. When students begin with something that is easy and interesting and are rewarded for doing well, they will want to keep trying. Rewards may be grades, of course; and many teachers do guarantee grades for "creative" efforts. But praise and sharing student work by exchanging it, posting it, or publishing it are also forms of reward, as are laudatory remarks made by teachers in private conferences with students.

Thus, many things may help, and many plans for the improvement of student writing lie on the threshold. Until such programs are developed, the individual teacher of composition (or better yet, departments or clusters, working with Area specialists) can and must develop sequential segments of writing, interspersed with sentence manipulation exercises, student evaluation, and extended writing experience. In developing such programs, the teachers may turn out to be those exemplary teachers of writing for whom everyone is looking!

JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL FOUNDATIONS FOR EXPOSITORY COMPOSITION

John Yockey, Hughes Junior High School, Area L

Majority opinion in professional publications for English teachers, and my own experience, indicate that junior high school students can be encouraged toward more adult forms of expository composition under the following conditions:

> When they view composition as a routine and nonthreatening mode of communication--when they write frequently and with little pressure--and
>
> When they write about things that are amusing or important to them

Corollary to this position is the idea that junior high school students are most ready to grapple with the more rigorous intellectual requirements of expository form after they have achieved substantial fluency and comfort with a variety of other, less-elevated prose forms.

Since variety is one of the prime conditions, I have chosen to offer several activities with brief annotations, rather than to develop a single example exhaustively. It is, of course, the spirit of the activities that I am advancing. While these particular exemplars have worked well with a variety of students, change is the ever-present imperative in junior high school.

Most of the activities can be tied to instruction in grammar and usage. For instance, students may be asked to underline one of their sentences that conforms to a particular sentence pattern, or to use a given number of correctly punctuated compound sentences in a piece of writing.

A full consideration of the issues involved in evaluating the sort of writing produced by these activities would lead far beyond the scope of this paper. However, it must be noted that even a modest commitment to this approach generates a startling volume of writing. No teacher will be able to read it all, nor ought to try.

SOME ACTIVITIES

1. Writing about doing. Generate a brief, high-interest activity and have the students write about it. Suggest modes of organization to fit the activities:

   a. Improvisations
   b. Walks (within the campus, to look closely at a tree in bloom or at a vandalized wall)
   c. Showing the class how to make an object from origami or playdough. Have the students make the object, then write about it.

2. Advertising. This fits nicely with the eight-grade mass media unit. The task may be structured in numerous ways. Try giving the entire class the job of writing an advertisement for something that students will find either funny or outrageous (a date with Alice Cooper; their grammar books). Then, have the class select the several most effective advertisements.

3. Letters. No junior high teacher need be reminded of the linguistic gusto which adolescents bring to the writing of their omnipresent "secret notes." A good deal of this enthusiasm can be captured in more structured letter-writing activities. Where possible, make the letter-writing situation real, or as nearly real as possible. Have seventh graders write to sixth graders about the things that you have to know in order to survive in junior high school. Eighth and ninth graders can draft business letters which ask for jobs, express a consumer's concern, or endeavor to inform a congressional representative.

4. Headline writing. Working with the whole class or in small groups, evolve a news story orally. For example, students could elaborate the details around the story germ that Kotter has fallen in love with one of his students. Then, ask students to write a headline for the story; ask them to compose the lead paragraph of their story as it would appear in a newspaper, answering the famous questions, who, what, when, where, and (sometimes) how.

5. Personal writing. Through personal writing in a nonjudgmental atmosphere, students may be led to comprehend the unique way in which written composition serves to focus and illuminate perceptions that would otherwise remain internal and inarticulate. Such practice with the written articulation of feelings is the maturational precursor of exercise in the exposition of ideas. A variety of techniques are available to facilitate personal writing.

a. Journals. Students are asked to spend the first 10 or 15 minutes of every period in the composition of entries for a personal journal. While students must write daily, they may declare a number of their entries to be "private." These entries are not read by the teacher. At appropriate intervals, students proofread, edit, and rewrite one of their own entries which will be evaluated for a grade. The teacher reads and comments upon other nonprivate entries as time allows.

b. Reaction papers. Ask students to react in writing to anything that they seem to take seriously: an assembly, a fight, a short story.

c. Values clarification. Many of the activities suggested in Values Clarification: A Handbook of Practical Strategies for Teachers and Students (Simon, Howe, and Kirschenbaum; Hart Publishing Co., New York) are explicitly productive of personal writing.

Note: Further suggestions appear in the following articles:

Phelan, Patricia. "How to Get Kids to Write," English Journal 64 (April, 1975), 6365.

Hipple, Ted. "Writing in the Middle/Junior High School," English Journal 64 (May, 1975), 82-83.

T E A C H I N G S E N T E N C E - C O M B I N I N G

Marjorie Kassorla, Millikan Junior High School, Area I

I became interested in teaching sentence-combining after I read Frank O'Hare's Sentence Combining: Improving Student Writing Without Formal Grammar Instruction (No. 15 in a series of research reports sponsored by the NCTE Committee on Research). Two of O'Hare's ideas appealed to me. One was that sentence-combining, or the sentence-building process, involved both semantic and syntactic considerations, and the other was that sentence-combining could be taught without overwhelming students with grammatical terminology.

I have always felt that the purpose of "teaching grammar" was to help the student manipulate the language and, in turn, to improve both the style and the clarity of the student's own writing. I had tried to work out ways to present alternative structures, and O'Hare's statement that sentence-combining "expands the practical choices, the options truly available to the inexperienced young writer when he needs them" sounded hopeful. Further, I felt that the content of student writing certainly couldn't end with "drill" sentences; the student had to write about something. To this end, I hoped to combine "grammar" and literature.

My first attempt at teaching sentence-combining was with a ninth grade honors class. Because the students were highly verbal and already able writers in many respects, I skipped many of the structures illustrated by O'Hare and decided to focus on nominative structures. I realized that these were more difficult, but I felt that they would be new and challenging and that these students could handle them.

I told the class that we were going to try a new approach to grammar. I explained that the purpose of our work was simply to expose them to alternative ways of expressing their thoughts. I explained that once they knew that there were choices, they would probably start to use them unconsciously, but that at first someone had to let them know what alternative structures existed. I mentioned that there are some structures that are effective in writing but are not used in speaking and that, although these patterns might sound particularly strange at first, eventually the students would be able to use them effectively in their writing.

With no more introduction than this, I presented the first structure, the noun clause as the subject of the sentence. I put the material on the board in much the same way that O'Hare presents sample sentences. The first sentence has a blank with the word "SOMETHING" written in. The second sentence is a complete one. I told the students that the blank with the word "SOMETHING" indicates a place where some word or words must be written in. The idea is to use the second sentence to fill in the blank, thus combining the two sentences. I put the following on the board and asked the class to volunteer ways to combine the two sentences without changing the verb form and without just adding "and."

SOMETHING did not surprise me.
Period 2 came in talking and giggling.

As I anticipated, the class could not work out a combination without making major changes, so I finally suggested adding "That" and wrote "That Period 2 came in laughing and giggling did not surprise me." No one in the class was conscious of ever having read a sentence structured like this (though these students read widely), and certainly no one in the class had ever written this kind of sentence. I suggested that beginning with "The fact that" meant essentially the same thing and suggested they use this structure if they felt more comfortable with it. I helped them see that either structure answered the question, "What surprised me?" and that there was no way one could answer that question with one or two words and retain the meaning. I then passed out copies of a sheet with a few practice sentences on it. The only directions were that the students should combine them by using "That" or "The fact that," and nearly everyone got all of the sentences right.

I followed the same procedure in presenting three more structures. I always worked some samples on the board, briefly told what the pattern of change would be, and then let the class volunteer answers. My instruction was done by using "signals" similar to those of O'Hare's. I did not need to use or teach any grammatical terminology to get the concepts across. I also reviewed previous structures before introducing a new one, always pointing out the several ways one could write the same sentence. The students could quickly see the instances in which a previous structure would not work in the new sentence. In either case, the students were growing in their awareness of the idea that options are available in written expression.

This procedure took about two weeks. I wanted to present four nominative structures in a concentrated amount of time, so that the alternatives could be kept in mind. In addition to the noun clause, I introduced the infinitive phrase and the noun phrase. Two forms of the latter were taught, the use of the gerund and change of the verb to a noun form. Below are the second, third and fourth structures I taught.

2. For...to transformation
   SOMETHING is just what we expected.
   Susan is absent on a test day.
   For Susan to be absent on a test day is just what we expected.

3. Possessive +...ing transformation
   SOMETHING is just what we expected.
   Susan is absent on a test day.
   Susan's being absent on a test day is just what we expected.

4. Verb to related noun form transformation
   SOMETHING made us think she was a snob.
   She refused to come to any of our parties.
   Her refusal to come to any of our parties made us think she was a snob.

Although O'Hare gives more than two sentences to combine in many of his sample structures, I chose to limit the combinations to two or occasionally three sentences so that I could introduce four new transformations, all of which were alternative nominative structures.

After the students had worked on the few practice sentences for each new structure, I gave them a longer sheet that had sentences to be combined. All the sentences were based on The Red Pony, because the class had just finished reading it. Their instructions were to combine the sentences so that they made sense according to the ideas in the story, and to do so by using any of the combining structures we had learned. No signals or cues were given. The following are examples from this exercise:

SOMETHING was a harsh reality that Jody had to face.
Billy Buck was not infallible.
That Billy Buck was not infallible was a harsh reality that Jody had to face.

SOMETHING was to be SOMETHING.
Jody takes care of Nellie for nearly a year.
Jody proves to his father that he could care for a horse of his own.
For Jody to take care of Nellie for nearly a year was to be his proof to his father that he could care for a horse of his own.

The final assignment involved using the nominative structure as part of a topic paragraph. We had already done a considerable amount of work developing topic sentences and structuring paragraphs with supporting details. The students had been having difficulty writing concluding sentences for their topic paragraphs. I suggested that the structures we had just learned were particularly effective ways to make a summary statement. In an effort to pull together our work on literature, paragraphing, and sentence-combining, I assigned a written paragraph, giving the class the topic sentence: "The Red Pony is the story of Jody's growing maturity." The students were instructed to pay special attention to Jody's actions and attitudes at the end of each section of the book when developing supporting details, and to end the paragraph with a summary statement using one of the structures we had just learned. One paper ended with, "The fact that Jody does not just think of his own feelings but has begun to give of himself shows his growing maturity."

One of the most interesting aspects of sentence-combining is that it seems to lead naturally to other skills. We stopped to learn other skills as the need arose. In teaching structure No. 2, I found that even honors students had little concept of the infinitive in English. Similarly, they didn't seem to know what it meant to "conjugate a verb" in English, although they were learning to do so in foreign language. It was appropriate here to go over these terms. In teaching structure No. 3, I found that the students were confused by the "ing" ending in the noun phrase and by the main verb in the sentence. This led to reviewing verbs and a verbal used as a noun. Also in teaching structure No. 3, the class members discussed their preferences in placing modifiers. Students began to make personal choices

between "John's writing illegibly confuses everyone" and "John's illegible writing confuses everyone."

The most interesting lessons that began as a sidelight of sentence-combining grew out of problems that arose with structure No. 4. As the students tried to change the verb to the related noun form, they found that they often did not know the related noun form, and they also found that they didn't know how to look it up in the dictionary. For example, in the practice sentence given (see sample for structure No. 4) the students looked up "refuse" and found that they had to read the definition carefully to avoid using "refuse" (waste or garbage) and go on to find "refusal." Various worthwhile dictionary lessons resulted from the need to know how to find related forms of a given word.

The sentence-combining proved to be helpful to these able students. They showed an eagerness to make choices between alternative structures and had strong convictions about which choice "sounded" better. Often, because both choices were correct, it became a matter of personal choice that was obviously moving in the direction of developing a personal writing style. Most important, I noticed that many of the students began using these four nominative structures in their writing for the remainder of the semester simply because they had learned new ways of expressing themselves and found that often one of these structures was particularly effective.

I realize that this article concerns itself with success in teaching an honors class. I would like to add that I have tried sentence-combining in average ninth grade classes and have noted varied results. In one semester, I tried teaching simpler structures than those discussed in this article. Because the possible combinations seemed so easy (to me), I gave fewer signals or cues. The result was that the students were confused and "combined" the structures by simply writing run-on sentences.

However, in another ninth grade class a student teacher, Jane Stansbury Berk, and I found that students could be taught the shades of difference between various subordinators. Then, given a list of many subordinators, students could be asked to combine sentences based on the stories they had read. They had to write a sentence that was not only grammatically correct but that made sense according to the events and characterizations in the story. From "Flowers for Algernon," the exercise was to combine:

> Charlie wanted to have the operation that Dr. Nemur planned.
> He realized the change in his intelligence might be temporary.

The sentence, "Charlie wanted to have the operation that Dr. Nemur planned (even though) (although) he realized the change in intelligence might be temporary" is correct. The sentence, "Charlie wanted to have the operation that Dr. Nemur planned before he realized the change in intelligence might be temporary" is grammatically correct, but it is wrong according to the events in the story.

Sentence-combining needs to be carefully worked out to meet the needs of each class. In any case, it is an effective way to combine an understanding of

literature with writing skills and writing style. It promises to launch other lessons in related skills as the need arises. In all these ways, it opens up new horizons for the students.

Note: Sentencecraft, An Elective Course in Writing, by Frank O'Hare, has been added to the List of Authorized Textbooks, Junior and Senior High Schools, Los Angeles City Schools (Stock No. 359-184).

PREVISION AND REVISION IN TENTH-GRADE ENGLISH CLASSES

Elizabeth Husband, Hamilton High School, Area D

Every year a new invasion begins. Thirty to thirty-eight tenth graders tromp or gyrate into the English classroom, each student maneuvering to stake out a preferred territory, usually a seat as far away as possible from the place where the teacher presently stands. Tucking away--or already bedding down--into the remoter seats are quite a number of students who either find reading and writing a smashing bore or remember, painfully and shamefully, previous reading and writing classes. At least one among the many will barely be able to read and still thinks writing means not printing. At least five students will have acceptable writing skills.

Zero hour arrives approximately five minutes after the invasion. The teacher, flashing a general smile, must now or never outmaneuver the invading Visigoths. Since this is an English battleroom, the teacher must counter the slings and arrows of the outrageous with some pretty reliable tactics and sneaky ploys in order to win the battle of civilizing the mob. The attack begins, and the teacher aims--aims all semester to help the invaders to read and to write oftener and better.

At this point, the highfalutin title above needs explanation. Every English teacher knows that revision means the second glance at a work that an author takes in order to make corrections. Frequently, though, the English teacher forgets that the student, not the teacher, is the writer, and the teacher takes the second glance and does with a bloody red pen what the student should bloody well have done. The student skips teacher's corrections on the returned paper, eyes the grade, rumples the paper, pitches it in the round file. Teachers' misunderstanding of their part in the revision process causes such battle fatigue among English teachers that the horde passes through too many English classes without doing a jot of dirty work. The bulk of the revision is the student's responsibility, not the teacher's. The teacher's underlines or circles on final drafts indicate where mistakes have been made; the teacher's comments direct the student to writers' handbooks where explanation and help can be found.

Unlike revision, prevision is the teacher's responsibility. Simply put, prevision means more motivation, more pre-writing experiences, more practice writing, more palaver between students and between students and teacher--more ideas explored, more words used and defined, more models and reading selections discussed, more clarification of the assignment that the student will eventually write. Of the holy writing trinity--prevision, composing, and revision--prevision lends spirit to student writing. Prevision nudges the student, urges the student, pushes the student to reach out. Without prevision, student writing tends to be flat, dull, inept, joyless.

Pandemonium does not need to occur during prevision sessions if the teacher has previsioned specific strategy. Simply because talking comes before writing, the teacher can expect and accept noisy yakking. In fact, the

teacher will overgab at times, but his/her part in the prevision sessions is to inspire, to prepare, to lead, to push students to the point where they want to write or will write. Prevision sessions do not guarantee that students will write flawlessly and beautifully, but they do help students write better than before.

Sometimes, after reading the first two or three sets of student papers, tenth-grade teachers despair and decide that they will limit all writing assignments to a single expository paragraph. Their crackdown (or put-down) seems rather a doubtful way to inspire students to write or want to write. Average tenth-grade students tend to chafe under the discipline required to organize a tight little paragraph, usually under a teacher-supplied topic sentence. The only tenth-grade students who seem to tolerate semester doses of only expository writing are perhaps those who have already done a great amount of descriptive and narrative writing on their own or in previous classes. Although descriptive and narrative writing yields longer papers for the teacher's seeding and plowing, such assignments let the student feel that the papers are self inspired rather than teacher inspired. Even reluctant students will attempt an interior monologue, labor over a metaphor (often shockingly beautiful), or work gleefully to shock the unshockable teacher with a lurid description of something or other. All this is not to say that students will not be initiated to expository writing in the tenth grade, but it certainly is to say that beginning with <u>feeling</u> assignments before rattling the expository hardware will prepare students to write better <u>thinking</u> assignments later on.

But, no matter where the teacher begins, all writing assignments generally open with the teacher at least trying to explain the nature of the assignment. Sometimes the teacher clips the explanation so short that students don't see at all what and how they are to write. Prevision sessions that do not allow the students to see what there is to see before they write will not help students write better or at all. Two-thirds of the time allotted for writing assignments is well spent in prevision sessions. These sessions, for all kinds of written discourse, more or less follow a similar pattern: (1) teacher presents and introduces materials, activities, reading selections, and models (usually copies of successful student writing); (2) students respond to materials, selections, and models in various ways; (3) students verbalize their responses in class or in group; (4) students discuss, question, and evaluate responses in class or in group; (5) students may or may not be asked to jot down notes during or after response sessions; (6) students may or may not be asked to practice writing response inspired by the prevision session; (7) students may or may not wish to share practice writing with class or with group members.

Prevision sessions are vital when the teacher assigns descriptive/sensory papers. English teachers are renowned scavengers, and most of the materials listed here are not difficult to find. The teacher who wishes students to focus on detail, use sharp images, and avoid wishy-washy generalizations might arouse students by relying on the following materials and activities during many prevision sessions: (1) slides, pictures, and posters of people, places, and things; (2) actual things to see, handle, smell, or taste--rocks, snails, oranges, flowers, shells, feet, breakfast crunchies; (3) cassette

tapes of recorded sounds--traffic, classroom, foghorn, plane, shuffling feet; (4) class trips to places as nearby as the street corner, parking lot, chow line; (5) copies of models of descriptive/sensory writing; (6) reading selections that use descriptive passages to set tone.

Although descriptive/sensory prevision sessions seem to take a generous block of class time, narrative prevision sessions require even more time. Many students enter the tenth grade genre poor and television bug-eyes. These students who do not know a play from a short story must be made aware of how each is different and both are similar in some ways. The reading and the discussion of many and various well-chosen selections before assigning a story, play, dialogue, or monologue will help students and certainly save the teacher. Between reading-discussing sessions, which are really prevision sessions, the teacher might slip in some of the following stimulators: (1) short news items and cartoons with obvious conflicts to motivate on-the-spot oral tales, stories, narrative poems, ballads; (2) dramatic posters and photographs of two or three people in interesting settings to motivate on-the-spot dialogue between two or three students; (3) teacher-suggested titles--Man Refuses to Give Seat to Woman, Girl Leaves Home, Man Locks Wife and Children in Attic--to motivate instant drama; (4) a large mirror--student looks in mirror and talks to self--to motivate interior or dramatic monologues.

Narrative and descriptive writing seem to many teachers (especially teachers in content areas other than English) rather de trop in the students' practical world of history and science tests and sometimes even hateful term papers. Therefore, the tenth-grade English teacher sometimes during the semester must try valiantly to help--teach is the wrong word here--the feeling tenth graders to become thinking students. When does the teacher present the rules and regulations for writing developed expository paragraphs? Does she/he slip the expository writing in with the feeling writing or wait until late in the semester? The only reasons for withholding the teaching of the expository paragraph until late in the first semester are these: Narrative and descriptive writing permit students to feel they can write; narrative and descriptive writing introduce and expose students to a few writing tricks--tone, sentence variation, point of view, figurative language--and many, many brand-new words. Early exposure to style and word choice helps students write more lively paragraphs.

To learn to write acceptable expository paragraphs is difficult for most tenth graders, except for the five mentioned earlier, and impossible for those who are still struggling to master the basic skills. Rhetoric books are only somewhat helpful. Professional models simple enough to use are practically non-existent; professional paragraphs are never so mechanical as the ones the teacher usually wishes students to write. Perhaps the teacher's own collection of overhead transparencies and copies of successful student paragraphs provides the best materials to use during paragraph prevision sessions. Overteaching the topic sentence with a strong controlling idea and generally three major supports will help give students a basis for future expository writing instruction. To insist that most average students write acceptable minor supports requires a cudgel, especially during the first tenth-grade semester.

Up to this point much has been said about prevision, little about revision. Unfortunately, too many English teachers have allowed the sacred roll book and the devilish pen to make them compulsive revisers. Although the procedure here takes more class time, some of the steps might help teachers salvage a few Saturday and Sunday afternoons:

1. Teacher never accepts first or rough drafts. To make the rule hold, teacher has students staple rough draft to final draft before submitting.

2. Teacher is always available to students during class composing periods to answer questions, to help with grammar and sentence structure, to direct to references.

3. Students always compose rough drafts in class, never at home. To make this hold, teacher may seat-check rough drafts.

4. Students' final drafts always follow form established by the teacher at the beginning of the semester.

5. Each student reads final draft (sometimes rough draft) to a five-member group, or members of group exchange papers and read silently. Group chooses one of the five papers as most interesting (not best). Either writer, volunteer, or teacher reads the most interesting papers to the class.

6. Students skip every other line in writing final drafts; if composition books are used, students leave left-hand page blank. Students make all revisions on blank lines or pages. This procedure avoids rewriting, which students loathe.

7. Teacher merely circles or underlines most errors on final drafts. Teacher's comments usually suggest a section in the writer's handbook where student will find explanations and drills to help repair errors. Teacher grades and returns final drafts.

8. Students revise papers in class.

9. During class reading periods, teacher reviews revised paper with each student. The student who has made a thorough revision receives a bonus grade in the roll book.

Teaching writing to average tenth-grade students is a never-ending war of battles neither entirely won nor lost. Teachers who lose too many battles are those who take too much for granted at the beginning of the first tenth-grade semester. Only a few--a very few--incoming tenth graders know how to stick a paragraph together, and even the few are not sure what the devil coherence and unity mean. Asked early in the semester to choose a subject and write a paragraph or an essay for homework, the average tenth grader rebels, showing rebellion by turning in either a few miserable sentences or nothing at all. Of course, grammar lessons and drills are necessary, but day after day of grammar just for the sake of grammar paralyzes even the bright-eyed

student. Over-revision with the red pen wastes teaching and teacher's time and frustrates the student who did try. To lose the battle utterly, the teacher assigns one kind of writing, usually an expository paragraph, and insists the student turn in the assignments by dang and by gosh or fail.

To win only some of the battles, the teacher prepares students to write in prevision sessions and helps students to complete and revise all final writing assignments in the classroom. Prevision sessions rouse even the students bedded-down in the remoter seats by allowing them opportunities to move about, to talk, to act out, to pretend and imagine, to think they think they can. Students do write better in a classroom turned into a writing workshop, a noisy place, but still a place where writing and more writing happens because things are happening. Prevision sessions and much practice writing within the prevision sessions help the students approach final writing assignments with at least a modicum of understanding and some confidence. Not counting practice writing in notebook (or journal), the teacher assigns as many as nine final assignments during the first tenth-grade semester: two descriptive/sensory papers, two quite long narrative papers, and five expository paragraphs. Of course, these papers will be riddled with errors, but as the semester progresses, student papers will begin to show some improvement because students are increasingly made responsible for their revisions right under the teacher's nose. The teacher who partly wins the war will never expect flawless writing, just writing, more writing, more lively writing, and better writing.

S T R U C T U R I N G W I T H O U T S T I F L I N G

Dorothy Doyle, Crenshaw High School, Area E

When teachers ask, "What do you do with your tenth graders?" I usually take a deep breath and begin a long discussion on classroom atmosphere, grading, structuring of assignments, group work, individual help outside of classroom, etc. And the question comes again, "Yes, all that is fine; but what do you do?" Perhaps you react in the same way. When faced with 35 to 40 restless bodies every day for 50 minutes, the teacher makes a desperate cry for "the lesson!" My own need over the past 15 years has produced a filing cabinet of just such "lessons." They are on duplicated sheets, they are replete with minute instructions, and they work for me--but only under certain conditions. The best lesson will wither and die like a plant without water if classroom conditions are not conducive toward its nurture. Success is relative.

I see the tenth-grade year as a gradual attempt by the student to adjust to new atmosphere and new expectations. The teacher must win the students over to a more mature level of work and cooperation with each other as well as with the institution. Pitfalls are many: 15-year olds are self-conscious, sometimes rude, worried about their ability or perhaps overly self-confident, impatient. They want "someone in charge" at the same time that they demand to make their own decisions. Into this set of contradictions the teacher introduces "the lesson."

My first assignment is to ask students to bring magazines with lots of ads: women's magazines, Ebony. Other teachers bring their back issues to me for the asking. At the end of a week, students have brought enough, been thanked and told that the magazines are for everyone to use (not private property.) During this week we have a lot of "getting settled" to do.

Students write a brief introduction of themselves: what they liked or disliked most about their last school, their hobbies, home responsibilities, job, and anything else they would like for me to know about them. I do not grade this paper. I read it and put it away. We spend time on a few "rap sessions" as to what they disliked most about other English classes. This is important because most students come with definite prejudices, and in some cases real anger or despair. They talk and I listen. We also discuss grading.

What shall we do about grades? It's like walking a tightrope at best. Grades are a reward when the student succeeds. They are punishment when the student fails. Most students can't handle failure. It does not motivate them to strive harder--usually. Unmerited reward can only mislead. How to navigate this tightrope? I do not give a letter grade until I am sure and the student is sure that something has been learned and merits grading. My lessons are devised so that preparation work is checked ✓ (satisfactory) or ✓- (unsatisfactory). When an assignment is not satisfactory, it must be rewritten and the original returned with the new copy stapled on top. I read the new version, check to see if it is now correct, put O.K. in the

grade book over the minus sign, then return it to the student. A rewritten paper is automatically a "C" grade. The original paper is done in class; the rewrite is homework, completed within a day or two. Every assignment is required. I give no "D" grade because every satisfactorily completed paper is "C". Students receive "B" or "A" for papers well done on the first attempt. A student is failing if rewrites are not completed on time or class work missed through absence is not made up.

I tell students that the object is to learn whatever the assignment was designed to teach--whether that takes one, two or three attempts. Eventually students do become more particular about their work. The real job of the teacher is to keep these papers coming in--and to make clear, detailed corrections before handing them back. Check on the student, call home if necessary, ask the student to rewrite at lunchtime if special help is needed or come after school. There are also times when students who are falling behind can be helped during regular class time. I keep a stock of fifty paperback books that are surefire reading for this age group. Usually, during one class a week they read the book they have chosen. They keep the book in the classroom, keep a reading record of the pages they read each time they take the book, and have no set time for finishing a book. If, after they read 10 pages, they do not like the book, they can exchange it for another. During this reading time, poorer students can be helped individually, can work on papers they can't seem to do at home alone. Students who finish their written work ahead of the rest of the class are encouraged to "get their record and book and read."

Students must keep a notebook into which they can fasten their papers. It is brought to class each day along with pen and pencil. All papers prepared and completed for this class must be kept in the notebook. One week before midterm (which requires a letter grade) the student will average out the letter grades and tell the teacher what his/her grade should be. If there is disagreement, the student brings the notebook up and both can review it and the rollbook together. If the student has not kept the papers, s/he can not quarrel with the gradebook. This system works if the teacher has been vigilant about requiring rewrites.

Now we are ready to proceed with the lesson. We read a summary of the paperback book, The Permissible Lie (about three pages). Discussion is informal and includes terms used in the summary as well as any examples students can think of from their TV viewing of 'tricks' used in advertising. The next day, students are handed a duplicated form that asks them to find four types of ads using the 'tricks' described in the article: words and slogans; ads that use testimonials; ads that use a test, and ads that use nonsense. Each student (using the magazines at our disposal) must find each type of ad, tear out the page, staple it to a blank sheet of paper, label it, and put it aside to hunt for the other types.

"Words and slogans" asks the student to find an ad in which it says that "_____ helps," or "Only _____ makes it," or "_____ is better (or cleaner)." The first is a trick because we don't know how much "helps" is. The second tricks us because we are led to believe it is good because this company makes it (which may not be true). The third trick is due to the "er" ending on a word that does not make clear "Better than what?" or "Cleaner than what?" It might be cleaner than dirt! The student often must read the fine print to find the slogan.

on a word that does not make clear "Better than what?" or "Cleaner than what?" It might be cleaner than dirt! The student often must read the fine print to find the slogan.

The testimonial tricks the reader because the person testifying is being paid to say the product is good (according to a new law, she/he must now use the product.) Another trick is that what is good for one person is not necessarily good for another. The trick with tests is that often what is left out of the testing is more important than what we are told. Were only leading brands tested? The nonsense ad tricks because it asks for the reader's attention with some silly, eye-catching picture or phrase instead of giving needed information for evaluating the product.

After each type of ad is stapled to blank paper and labeled, the student is asked to write a series of three paragraphs for each ad. The first paragraph must give a detailed description of the entire ad. Ask, "What do you see?" The second paragraph must answer the question, "What does the ad want you to do or think about the product?" The third paragraph is produced when the student answers the question, "What do I feel about the product now that I have read the ad?" At the teacher's discretion a fourth paragraph might be in answer to the question, "What trick was used in this ad? Why was it a trick on the reader-consumer?" Students with poor writing skills will write one and two sentences for a paragraph. Those more advanced will produce detailed versions. Students keep their paper in whatever magazine they were looking at when the bell rang (name sticking out over the top of the magazine.) Magazines are collected and stored in a cabinet until the next day, then returned to students for work in the classroom. Encourage students to share extra copies of ad types with other students. The teacher is a resource, helping those who are discouraged, showing how to scan ads for wording, validating those who say they have found one (check out each ad before it is stapled). After about a week, most of the class will be writing instead of looking. As they finish <u>all</u> the paragraphs for all the ads, they hand them in--or they may hand them in as they finish them.

These papers should be corrected by the teacher for spelling, sentence endings, coherence, completeness. Most of them will require a ✓- and be returned to the student for rewriting. As this is the first rewrite, encourage them to finish them in class. Explain that they must copy the corrections exactly--not create an entirely new version.

Some students will be completely finished days before others. They will even have done the rewrites and been given a letter grade, and now they have nothing to do. Be prepared with your 50 paperback books; allow each student to browse, choose a book, fill out a reading record, and read until the rest of the class is finished--perhaps another day to two. Some students will be so slow they will have to finish their writing at home; but these papers will not get higher than a "C" letter grade, whether rewritten or not.

Is this a lot of work--marking the first paper, giving a possible check-minus, looking the second paper over to see if the students have made the corrections, assigning a grade to the finished paper? Of course. But there are compensations. Structuring builds each student's belief in his/her own ability. Cooperation noticeably increases. As skills improve, the teacher's

load lessens; students are willing to help each other. Of course, no system is really workable when all five classes consistently have 40-plus students. Under such conditions, we must begin to think in terms of student aides from the higher grades, assistant teachers, aides from colleges and the community. But this type of structuring of material lends itself to such help. Students are working at their own pace; teachers are available to help those in need.

The correction of rewrites goes quickly. It gives the student a feeling that every attempt is of concern to the teacher. There is immediate feed-back on mistakes and a chance to correct them and not be penalized. Failure is impossible as long as she/he pays attention to the corrections indicated. The student does try to do better because rewriting takes up extra time (either as homework or in not reading a book chosen in class.)

Ask students to keep a list of any words they have misspelled. They are instructed to look at that spelling list before handing in any written assignment. They are looking for words that they usually misspell. And they find them!

The ad assignment described above is a good opener for a class. Looking through the magazines, helping others, and talking while working generate a good feeling. Reading of the article aloud helps establish the reading level of the class, scanning is learned in finding the correct type of ad, many paragraphs are written without agony. The teacher can get an idea of the writing skills level of this class. There is no attempt made to construct formal paragraphs at this time. Such lessons will come later. The entire project takes two to three weeks, long enough to get newcomers settled in.

Where do we go from here? I usually introduce some discussions of sentence sense and grammar to indicate why they are doing so much rewriting and to give hope that they can improve. We ease into four-part structural grammar lesson series without too much trauma. At the same time we move from ads to popular television shows--half-hour situation comedy and drama--observing, discussing in groups, writing.

With this type of structuring, student expectations are high, and cooperation is good because the student does not feel stifled. The "lesson" has at least a realistic chance of success.

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WHAT CAN I SAY ABOUT MY SUBJECT?

Patricia Y. Murray, Chatsworth High School, Area L

Once the student has found or been assigned a subject to write about, his/her next task is to find something to say about that subject. The writer can approach this problem in a number of ways, beginning with what she/he has already written and ending with a systematic questioning approach that will yield information.

First, if the student keeps a journal--any kind of journal, whether used strictly for self-expression and experimentation or as a record book of writing assignments--it can be a rich source of material and an aid to invention.

Second, productive brainstorming sessions with classmates or others interested in the same topic can yield ideas, associations, and different perpectives that enable the writer to begin the information-gather process. Although brainstorming is unsystematic, exchanging initial ideas with others leads to broader views or encourages revision of original notions toward better, more productive ones.

But for most inexperienced student writers, a problem-solving device, in itself a teaching method that encourages the writer to discover information, will be the best aid to generate ideas about a subject. This (heuristic) device serves a multiple purpose: It aids in invention, it points out what the writer already knows about the subject and needs only to be "retrieved," it shows the writer what she/he doesn't know but needs to research, and it indicates what further questions need be asked in order to yield the most productive material. Additionally, it may reveal to some extent how the information needs to be organized in order to communicate fully to a reader.

The simplest heuristic, one which is immensely helpful and which can be handled by any grade or ability level, is the familiar "Who? What? Why? When? Where? How?" approach. These six basic questions, systematically applied to the subject, enable the questioner to walk around the subject and examine every aspect of it. It is much like brainstorming, except that students can use these basic questions more systematically and thus more fruitfully. This heuristic applies equally well to literary or non-literary subjects. The sample illustrates how the student might use this system:

> TO THE STUDENT: You have been asked to write a short essay about "Silent Snow, Secret Snow." But what can you say about the story? We have talked before about how to use the six basic questions, WHO? WHAT? WHY? WHEN? WHERE? HOW? as a handy system for finding information, details, and descriptions about a topic. Use the following outline as a guide to gathering information and details from this story. Once you have gathered the "things to say about your subject," we will be able to organize the material and write the essay.
> ADD MORE QUESTIONS in each category as you think of them.

WHO?	Who are the people involved in the story? Who is Deidre? Miss Buell? Paul? The man whose footsteps are heard each morning? Who is concerned with Paul's health?
WHAT?	What happens to Paul in this story? What happens first, second, third, last? What does the doctor say when he examines Paul? What is the story the voices in the snow tell Paul?
WHERE?	Where does this story take place? How can you tell? Where are the voices that speak to Paul? Where is Paul at the end of the story?
WHEN?	When does the story take place? When does Paul see the snow? When do the postman's footsteps disappear?
WHY?	Why is Paul ill? Does the story tell you? Why is Paul "daydreaming"? Why does the story end with the words "peace," "remoteness," and "sleep"?
HOW?	How is the story about Paul told; that is, who seems to be telling it and in what manner? How does the reader come to understand what is wrong with Paul? How does the storyteller make you understand how Paul feels?

Other systematic questioning approaches are needed for different kinds of subjects. If your students are writing about literature, give them this version of Kenneth Burke's "Pentad":

WHAT DOES IT SAY?	(Summarize or paraphrase the piece to get at its content. Remember, a poem poses a different kind of summary than an editorial.)
WHO WROTE IT?	(This goes beyond "William Shakespeare" or "Emily Dickinson" as an answer. What sort of person was the writer? What were his biases? What position did she hold?)
WHERE WAS IT FIRST PUBLISHED?	(There's a big difference between the Christian Science Monitor and the National Enquirer, or between a 17th century broadside and the New Yorker. Would the source influence reader reaction?)
WHEN WAS IT PUBLISHED? GEOGRAPHICAL LOCATION?	(Date and geographical location can be important. Time of publication may make the item of historical significance only. Publication in the U.S.S.R. may tell us something about its message.)

WHAT IS ITS PURPOSE? (There's a difference between apparent purpose and real purpose in some writing. What does the piece attempt to do to the reader?)

Another way of dealing with the same approach, originated by the linguist Roman Jakobson, allows the writer to look at all the elements of discourse: an addresser, a context, a message, contact, code, and an addressee. These elements generate important questions:

ADDRESSER?	What can I learn about the speaker or writer? How does knowledge of the addresser influence my response?
CONTEXT?	In what time and place does the discourse appear? Does the message, whether true or false, square with reality?
MESSAGE?	What is said? Do I understand the message? Is the message structured? How does its structure affect me, the listener or reader?
CODE?	What features of style are there? Word choice? Figures of speech? Sentence structure?
ADDRESSEE?	Who is the audience? Is there more than one? Are the apparent audience and the intended audience the same? Is the presentation appropriate for the audience? How does the audience respond?

Contact is not important here because it refers to a medium through which message is conveyed. However, sometimes typography and other decorative elements may affect audience response and should be noted.

Varying the perspectives (ways of viewing a subject) develops ideas through a series of questions one can ask about any subject, concrete or abstract. This system is especially applicable to the non-literary subject and to report writing. It is as easily managed by a junior high writer as it is by the older, more mature writer. Simply, it is productive of information the writer doesn't even realize she/he has already, and it points out to the writer what she/he doesn't know but needs to find out. The questions group themselves into three areas, which can be posed this way:

WHAT ARE THE SUBJECT'S DISTINCTIVE FEATURES?
HOW DOES IT CHANGE OR VARY WITHOUT BECOMING SOMETHING ELSE?
HOW DOES IT FIT INTO LARGER SYSTEMS TO WHICH IT BELONGS?

The teacher might hand out an example outline that teaches the questions to be asked and provides illustrations of the extended questioning that elicits information.

TO THE STUDENT: Nearly anything, whether it be object, event, or idea, can be looked at in different ways and from different angles. We call a viewpoint a perspec-

tive; a perspective is a simple way of viewing a subject. Listed here is a system--a scheme--for exploring our subject further by developing ways of viewing it. For practice, suppose our subject is a TV set, perhaps like the one you have in your home. We can view it

1. As an isolated, static thing in itself:
   - -What features characterize it?
   - -What kind (brand, make, model) is it?
   - -How tall or large is it?
   - -What size screen does it have?
   - -Is the antenna built in?

2. As a member of a class:
   - - How does this TV set compare with others of the same size and make?
   - -Is there anything unusual or distinguishing about this set that makes it stand out from others like it?
   - -Is this set used for different purposes from others of its class?

3. As part of a larger system:
   - -How is this TV set a part of a communication system that begins outside your home?
   - -What sort of system of communication is the TV set itself? Does it feature the spoken or written word? Does it depend largely upon visual communication?
   - -Response is a part of communication systems. How do you respond to the TV set?

4. As a process:
   - -The TV set may look very static (unchanging), but it can be thought of as a process, a changing, ongoing thing. In what way(s) is this TV set changing?
   - -Is it ageing? deteriorating? improving?
   - -Has it been altered or repaired? Parts replaced?

5. As a system:
   - -Look at the various parts of the set. What separate parts does it have that, taken together, make up the whole system of the working TV set?
   - -How do the individual parts function to operate the whole machine?

Then the student can be set to practicing this systematic approach to the subject (whatever it is), perhaps by "charting" the questions and their answers:

As isolated, itself	As member of a class	As part of larger system	As process of change	As system with parts

For more experienced writers and for students in senior high school composition courses, the heuristic that begins by stating the topic as a problem, then developing ideas for analyzing the problem and solving it, generates ideas for essays and reports. Developed by Richard L. Larson, this heuristic involves these steps:

1. DEFINING THE PROBLEM
2. DETERMINING WHY THE PROBLEM IS REALLY A PROBLEM
3. ENUMERATING THE GOALS THAT MUST BE SERVED BY ACTION TAKEN
4. DETERMINING WHICH GOALS HAVE PRIORITY
5. FINDING THE PROCEDURE TO ATTAIN THE STATED GOALS
6. PREDICTING THE CONSEQUENCES OF POSSIBLE ACTIONS
7. CHOOSING THE BEST COURSE OF ACTION

For example, if the topic is "After High School: College or Work?" the writer would begin this way:

Topic: After High School: College or Work?
Problem: Which course should I take for my future benefit? Should I go to college and earn a degree or should I look for a job and begin earning a living immediately after graduation? Which course will most satisfy me?

By working through each set of questions and by asking other questions related to the set, the writer arrives at the end able to draw a conclusion. This conclusion is handily posed as a thesis statement:

Thesis Statement: Because I plan to enter a highly skilled profession in the future, I should attend a college or university in order to get adequate education and pre-professional training.

Finally, it must be emphasized that if these systems are to be helpful, they must become part of the student's mental apparatus, organizing technique, and approach to solving the problem of what to say about the subject. It is not enough for the teacher to lead discussions using these techniques, although that is certainly a way of introducing them to students. The teacher must help the student see the effectiveness of heuristics and then provide opportunities for the student to use them.

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HOW'S AND WHY'S AND WHAT'S: SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT CONSTRUCTING TOPIC SENTENCES

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Although concerned primarily with constructing topic sentences for single-paragraph essays about literature, the suggestions given in this article extend to writing within any discipline. Certain statements and ideas find clear expression in particular linguistic constructions; this article examines some of these constructions and considers their applicability to the teaching of composition.

A composition teacher cannot just stand before a group of students and say "abracadabra," or invoke the muses, or employ some sleight-of-hand gesture that will guarantee that those students will create brilliant expository prose. There is no magic way to teach clear, logical, interesting writing. But some help does exist for teacher and student.

Effective expository paragraphs contain topic sentences that carefully lead the writer--and the reader--into the heart of the matter to be discussed. Topic sentences essentially promise to prove or explain some stated assertion. Students <u>can</u> write fairly well when they have some idea of what they are supposed to prove or explain. They need "handles" to which they can logically attach their supporting ideas. How can we, as their composition teachers, help these young writers to construct these handles? We can do this first by providing sample topic sentences and helping students develop them into paragraphs, and then we can teach them how to construct their own topic sentences, using the same linguistic formulas as those of the sample topic sentences, always making sure that sufficient time has been spent in prewriting instruction to make the students feel secure about the assignment. Better to over-instruct than to under-instruct in the beginning lessons. Helpful at this time is having the students aware of the 10 basic sentence patterns, of independent and dependent clauses, of adjective and adverbial functions, and of certain other linguistic elements, particularly the construction and function of prepositional and verbal phrases.

How many thousands of papers we teachers have read in which the students write on and on about <u>what</u> happened, sparing us not even the most inconsequential detail, but seldom, if indeed ever, explaining the <u>how</u> or <u>why</u> of anything! It is time for the students to do some proving and explaining in their essays, to tell us about the <u>how's</u> and <u>why's</u> of the <u>what's</u>.

Because in a one-paragraph essay the writer needs to acquaint the reader quickly with the basic subject matter and the source of this matter, a workable beginning for the topic sentence is an initial prepositional phrase in which title and author of the work considered are given. Soon enough students will develop other ways to include this information, but in the initial lessons, statement of title and author are an integral part of the first sentence. Having given this information, the student then applies a linguistic formula such as the following in which to couch the rest of the topic sentence: N^1 + TV + N^2 + (a "how" adverbial construction)
+ (a "why" adverbial construction)

Another way to write this formula would be: subject + transitive verb + direct object + a "how" construction + a "why" construction. Basically, what this formula says is that something or someone does something in a certain way for a particular reason, or that something or someone does something to someone or something in a certain way for a particular reason. Consider how the following topic sentence follows the formula:

> In Julius Caesar, Shakespeare uses the wives of Brutus and Caesar as character foils to accentuate certain characteristics of these two powerful Roman leaders.

As per formula, the sentence begins by citing the literary source and author (in this instance, using the author as the subject of the sentence), continues with a transitive verb, and a direct object, and has a "how" construction in the "as" prepositional phrase and a "why" phrase in the infinitive phrase that ends the sentence. Such a sentence fulfills the requirements for the topic sentence of an expository paragraph, the purpose of which is to interpret some aspect of literature, ostensibly to further one's own understanding of the human condition. In less than 25 words in the sample topic sentence, we know that the work is Julius Caesar and Shakespeare its author, that we will be reading about husband/wife relationships, and that these relationships will reveal something about the characteristics of Brutus and Caesar. An effective topic sentence also teases the reader into wanting more information; our sample sentence does this, too.

Before giving other examples of topic sentences using this formula, let us pursue a slightly tangential matter. Priceless prose does not spring fully written from the minds of students who have not been somehow prepared to share information and their thoughts about it. Pre-instruction is a most important adjunct of clear writing. Before the students have been given the topic sentence, they should already have the support material in their notes, with pages and lines noted for easy referral. The information now has to be organized into some logical pattern. Will it be comparison/contrast, problem/solution, cause and effect, spatial, categorization, inductive, deductive, presentation of details from least important to most important or vice versa, analogy, or some combination of these?

Should the assigned essay be one of the first in the semester and if presentation of ideas according to some order has not yet been discussed, time in experimenting with logical ordering would be well spent at this point. Transitions between sentences come with much greater ease when a logical pattern underlies the whole paragraph. Further, if this is an early lesson in the composition program, students may need to be reminded that the points in the body of an essay are discussed in the same order in which they are mentioned in the topic sentence. In the Julius Caesar paragraph, the Portia/Brutus relationship would be mentioned first.

Students often have trouble ending their paragraphs so that they sound complete. A topic sentence that includes how/why elements somehow makes the task easier; and because the students have been analyzing and answering questions throughout the paragraph, they tend to construct conclusions that echo, "This is what I have learned from the analysis that I have made," rather than the often redundant if not insipid summary clincher sentence.

A concluding sentence for the Julius Caesar paragraph might indicate the persuasive power of emotional appeal or suggest that these husband/wife scenes serve as microcosms for larger ideas about the power of communication in the play. Or the ending sentence might state that, in the light of the events in these scenes, neither Brutus nor Caesar was the reasonable man he thought himself to be. How/why elements in a topic sentence lead students to ask themselves just what they have discovered in their observations, thus facilitating the composing of conclusions worthy of the paragraph.

Now, back to the example patterns. Using such prescribed formulas may seem too highly structured, too restricting. But the proof of the process lies in the shape and quality of the final product, and my experience has been that using these formulas as inroads into expository writing produces better writing with greater evidence of organized thought. It has also been my experience that once students understand a formula they tend to work more freely on developing style, on creating new ways to use the basic formulas. A few more examples of the same formula based on other literary works follow:

> In The Scarlet Letter, Hawthorne uses color symbolically to differentiate between sins of passion and sins of the intellect.

and,

> In When the Legends Die, Hal Borland shapes our attitudes toward the characters by the way he initially describes them.

and,

> In the second stanza of "The Return," Edwin Muir drastically changes the impact of the time and action imagery to assure the reader that Penelope is providing the home port, the haven, to which Ulysses will eventually return.

Two other basic patterns with which I have experimented with students are these: (1) Following the direct object in a transitive verb sentence or the subject complement in a linking verb sentence with a subordinate or dependent clause that contains the point to be proven or explained:

> In J.D. Salinger's The Catcher in the Rye, the adolescent protagonist, Holden Caulfield, cannot accept the adult world because he finds its values shallow at best.

and,

> Thomas Gradgrind, in Charles Dickens' Hard Times, is a man who too late learns that a world which disallows fancy is a destructive world.

(2) Following the verb in an intransitive pattern with a significant adverbial construction:

> Much of the charm of e.e. cummings' poetry lies in the manner in which he combines parts of words or full words into one new word, intensifying both the denotative and connotative aspects of that word.

Of course, these are not the only patterns that can serve as basic, workable formulas. After a few experiences with the very structured approach, students often want to try other patterns, other formulas--and the door is opened! Then we begin to talk of other things--of style and grace and words with ring. We experiment with placing the topic sentence in other than initial position in a paragraph, with beginning paragraphs with attention-getting sentences before the topic sentence, and, most important, with the expanding of topic sentences into thesis statements. Patterns and formulas exist everywhere. When students begin to apply some logic, some pattern, some order, to their writing, they advance with giant steps toward clarity and creativity of expression.

MARKING TO TEACH COMPOSITION

Virginia E. Jorgensen, University High School, Area D

Somewhere in the center of extremes lies the truth about composition marking. Some teachers believe papers should be graded for "idea." Can an idea survive awkward syntax, dangling modifiers, misuse of idiom, and inaccurate diction? Some teachers believe compositions should be used for counseling--no marks given, just conferences that question and probe. Here we must distinguish between counseling the student about his/her personal life and counseling about the paper. This latter approach is productive if class conditions are right, that is, if the teacher is not in a corner with one student while the other 34 try to direct themselves. Then there are those teachers who see their role as that of night editor, with red pencil and green eye shade. Contrary to common opinion, this last group is very small and possibly maligned far more than it deserves. Where shall the teacher of good will and good conscience stand? The pragmatic answer would seem to be no answer, but "it depends." It depends, in fact, on the students as well as the teacher. It also depends on the purpose and nature of the composition assignment.

Like doctors, we should each have a few writing principles we teach gradually and even repetitiously as prevention before the cure of marking. Mine happen to be the following: (1) There is pleasure in the word well placed and the thought well said. (2) Pride in the writing process makes the student write what he means. Now, all of us know that much of writing--a rhythmic ear for the language, for example--cannot be taught. My few guiding lines for instruction are these, and they may be yours as well: (1) All things have form as well as substance. The shape of the composition is like the shape of a sentence, with a beginning, middle, and end. Diagrams on the chalkboard like those in Sheridan Baker's The Complete Stylist, recently copied with permission in the paperback The Lively Art of Writing, by Lucile Payne, are useful. (2) Every idea is related to the one before it and the one after it. This simple truth flashed on me once when I heard Wayne Booth talk about writing. I would like to discuss three different kinds of marking for three different kinds of writing. Needless to say, these assignments are for students of varied academic abilities, abilities not always synonymous with writing talent. Let us begin with the hardest situation first.

My class was a one-semester eleventh-grade American literature and composition class of about 33. I say "about" because this class had a high rate of transience and was comprised of students from 16 different high schools entering our school for the first time. Some were frightened, some were bold, and some were hopeful. Their abilities ranged from those called "remedial" to State Identified Gifted. After other ill-advised assignments, I decided to try writing folders and to invest in a box of pens. All writing was done in class, several times a week when possible: a punishing pace. Reading had to be varied from Scope to regular texts and library books. Writing assignments were a way of bringing the class together.

Two of these "journal" writings were directed toward point of view. In the first one, we read Thurber's "The Letters of James Thurber." Then the students adopted Thurber's ironic and sometimes touching stance, writing about themselves in third person, as commentator. Elaine was a spirited, gifted girl who tossed words, usually hitting the mark, but often missing matters she considered elementary. She responded to the check system, "hunt the problem" approach with the aid of a handbook and teacher help. The "A" she received after revision evidently was worth the game.

Dave was a remedial reader with demanding parents. Encouraging him to write naturally seemed the best idea. His sense of humor and his desire to be the smart, "nice" boy adults wanted came through. He liked notes and circled errors on his papers. As soon as he cared about his writing, he asked other students for help in revising.

At first, these students were individualists. They did not want others to see their writing, yet they liked having several papers read aloud, always anonymously. Any successful journal entry could receive a high mark after it was revised carefully.

Another journal assignment students seemed to like also kept the writer dead center, but this time using first person. The class first saw a videotape about Thoreau, nicely laced with sayings from Walden. We read aloud the passages about the morning at Walden Pond. We looked at posters of scenes from nature and discussed the use of the five senses in memory, mentioning also the possibility for the writer of conveying the kinesthetic and thermal senses as mentioned in Chad Walsh's Doors Into Poetry. The students were asked to imagine themselves in the place they would like to be at the moment out of doors. They were to help us see, hear, smell, taste, and touch. Now, we all know that too much build-up is as disastrous as too little. At any rate, they were ready to write. This well-known kind of writing, unfortunately, is an invitation to the trite and the cliché. Before revisions, we briefly discussed a scene from the tape, a dreary dumpyard of automobiles with a beautiful montage of a nature scene. Words can also be fresh or discards. I wrote on the board sentences like those mentioned in Strunk and White's The Elements of Style under "fancy words," "qualifiers," and "overwriting." The students had a little fun making editors' comments such as "baby cereal" or "salt free" for words like "good," "beautiful," or "unique"; "tidal wave" for the mighty line; "taffy," "bargain basement," or "scorched" for the sentimental, the trite, or the overdone. Too much comment of this sort can be inhibiting, however, for a low achiever like the student who wrote "Peacefulness." At any rate, some students went beyond penciled suggestions in the hunt for the words they really wanted.

Now let us consider another kind of class, another kind of assignment, but the same all-purpose teacher. If a senior composition class is academic, it still may have some of the same objectives as the other, eclectic class. The teacher wants to make the students like to write; wants to help them acquire the language skills necessary for college and the adult life, take pride in the product, and, as a result, think confidently of themselves. These senior students must learn to pursue and extend a central idea, to extend it in a way the reader can follow, and to connect from sentence to

sentence and paragraph to paragraph. The teacher's role in the first month of paper marking should probably be that of careful editor. Though many teachers prefer to check only the skills they have taught, I find the complete editing is well received. Students should become increasingly responsible for technical errors as skills lessons are given in some kind of sequence. My class sometimes takes up diction and idiom first, to show students that writing is not necessarily a matter of "grammar." We study usage sections of various texts and compare the choices of handbooks with words from the media. Students seem to delight in comment in The Elements of Style about "hopefully" and "flammable."

After the first three weeks, when the class is beginning to develop friendliness and a group spirit, the students exchange papers and edit any spelling, sentence, or diction error they notice, writing a comment at the end of the paper that shows some thinking. This procedure cleans up the rubble even faster than the teacher's editing, for students do not want their friends to see their carelessness. They are used to any form of criticism by an adult, after all. We now see that one of the principal objectives of the course is to make students read, really read, what they write. No teacher should spend 30 minutes reading a paper written in 10.

By midterm, after much paper exchanging, reading aloud in groups, and sometimes duplicating good papers (a great paper consumer, alas!), the class is ready for extended analysis, written like an essay, on a classmate's composition. I clip the name from each paper and assign a number to it. Then I give the "editor" another number, unknown to the other students, to guarantee objectivity. The comments may not be general, but must be made in terms of the essay itself: "After three pages of the detailed ceremony, history, method, and objective of Transcendental Meditation, the thesis is finally stated. The author proposes that TM is actually a modified, mass-appeal form of Hinduism, though it claims to be completely secular. The statement of thesis is clear but ineffectively delayed." (Sample student comment)

These comments then receive separate analysis by the teacher. The teacher also assigns the grades. Incidentally, I believe students prepare better through a writing class like this, where they can see some connection between English skills of all kinds and clear writing than they do in the semester drill classes often called "SAT Preparation." Let us hope these tests in English composition are a measure and not a goal.

After every five or six papers, students also profit by writing a paragraph based upon all comments on their papers in which they assess their own strengths and weaknesses. The heavily marked paper may present some problems. Teachers reveal their own attitudes when marking a paper and may be misunderstood by both parents and students. One method in a large class (and no composition class has a right to be large), when the teacher may not be available for questions by every student as papers are returned, is to tell students they are free to write comments on the teacher's comments and return the papers. Let the students know you are editor-in-chief but not the Big Boss. Everyone misinterprets occasionally, and you will listen to reason. I have always liked to use pencil for marking, since it is easily erased if I want to revise a comment, and it does not execute phychologically as red ink does. I like the suggestion of Jane Ball of Taft High School that she always uses green for "growth."

Not all writing needs to be expository, even in an expository writing class. Short, impromptu writing, interestingly introduced, can free the students from writing fear if they know it will not be graded, but given a plus or a check. Even this writing can serve a useful purpose, though, if students are told they must use examples or illustrations for their opinions on topics like, "Do you ever really learn anything from anyone else?" Successful use of examples from these quick writings encourages some students and helps others in the class.

Thus, for different kinds of students and for different purposes the teacher marks, both on paper and orally. Even more important, the students become their own commentators, perhaps the kind of responsible citizens whose writing will not baffle others in the adult world. They may even voluntarily write letters to the editors and letters to their congressional representatives to show that they care about the quality of the next century and their own.

Lest this bravura statement make you think I know any more than any of the rest of my hard-working colleagues, I hasten to say I do not. Each of us chooses what works best for the students and for oneself. There are only a few hours in each day for teaching through paper marking, after all.

"A FEW WORDS OF A KIND"

The following questions or ideas may be used for spontaneous ("impromptu," if you like) writing. Try 4- by 6-inch cards--never graded, but commented upon by class, teacher, single students--kept as a bank to draw upon for extended informal essays and discussion. Allow a short time for the spontaneous writing, perhaps 20 minutes, but never with a sense of pressure or shame when ideas do not spring from the head. If students like this writing, if they summon up the real toads in the imaginary garden, and if they write naturally and entertainingly, you have won the day. You will be able to think of introductions that may please you better, but mine are given for what they are worth.

1. Introduction: Catalog, Kandinsky at the Guggenheim Museum, 1972
   Essay, "Reminiscences: Why Kandinsky?" Modern Artists on Art, Robert L. Herbert, Ed.

   Writing: What is the first scene you remember? Do you associate sight, sound, or touch with it? Can you separate what you really remember from what anyone has told you about this memory? Describe it with a "painter's brush" or a "musician's ear", including the details that will make us share it.

2. Introduction: "One Man's Moment in History," from A Separate Peace, by John Knowles
   "Reflections, Disenchantment of an 18-Year-Old," by Joyce Maynard, "Opinion" Section, Los Angeles Times, April 23, 1972.

Writing: What one moment or period in your life can you find "imprinted" upon you? Do you find your attitude toward this period helps you select the details? Try a kaleidoscopic assortment of details, not a narrative.

3. Introduction: First names, Webster's New World Dictionary; last names, a page from the telephone book

Writing: How did you happen to receive your first name? If your last name has any special interest, you might prefer to discuss it instead.

4. Introduction: Man and His Values: An Inquiry Into Good and Evil, soundslides, The Center for Humanities, Inc.

Writing: Do you believe that people are basically good or basically evil? Tell one incident to illustrate your point.

5. Introduction: The concept of "Wyrd" from Beowulf
An incident showing good luck and an incident showing bad luck from the daily news

Writing: Do you believe that fate controls your life? Are you "the master of your ship?"

6. Introduction: The Invisible Man, by Ralph Ellison. "Be your own father, young man," p. 120
E. M. Forster, "What I Believe"

Writing: Do you ever really learn anything from anyone else? To what extent do you believe you need to make independent decisions, to "be your own father," as the vet says in The Invisible Man? Cite an instance or instances.

7. Introduction: The Grapes of Wrath, by John Steinbeck, Bantam edition. Casey's words to Pa about materialism, p. 227

Writing: Do you believe that money corrupts people?

8. Introduction: "Journeys Inside the Mind," record, from the Dialogues of Plato. Sidney Poitier. Warner Bros. Records

Writing: Students choose any lines they like from the recording. A favorite has been, "I would rather die speaking in my own manner than live speaking in yours." Giving a quotation an application is the task.

9. Introduction: Tup Tup, film, 8 minutes, BFA Educational Media, Santa Monica. Rental, $12. A little man settles down for peace and quiet, but a persistent "thump, thump" annoys him. One frenzied reaction follows another.

Writing: What are the "little things" that sometimes annoy you in an average day? Do you react more frequently internally than externally?

10. Introduction: A visual or word portrait of a person that is misleading about his/her occupation, social status, or personality. Many of Dickens's characterizations are based on the assumption that the outer person is the inner person.

Writing: Do you believe that the way a person dresses, the car the person chooses to drive, or the person's facial characteristics are an indication of the real person?

11. Introduction: "Will These 'New Era' Movies Brings Out the Snob in You?" by Allen McKee, The New York Times, October 28, 1973.

Writing: Do your ideas about a film or television program ever differ widely from those of your family, your friends, or a reviewer?

SAMPLE STUDENT ANALYSIS FORM (See page 31.)

Composition Evaluation

1. Comment on the writer's statement of thesis.

2. Comment on the "breakdown" of the thesis. Is it parallel to the thesis itself? Is it arranged logically? Are topic sentences restatements of the thesis divisions, using synonyms for variety?

3. Comment on the topic sentences in the paragraphs as suitable generalizations for supporting ideas. Are supporting ideas on the topic? Arranged logically? Connected smoothly with each other?

SAMPLE STUDENT RESPONSES TO WALDEN ASSIGNMENT (See page 30.)

(High)

Journal No. 1 not revised

When I came up over the ridge of the mountain, the feeling of solitude was overwhelming. Below me lay a high snow-covered valley. The snow glittered and the virginal whiteness was so bright that it hurt my eyes. The pine trees stood majestically, deep green dusted with snow.

trite

A cold wind gently teased my hair, but the sun was warm upon my face. I breathed deeply and filled my lungs with the biteing clean smell of the woods. Above me a hawk cried out as it dipped it's wings, making graceful loops in the air. I looked back down into the valley and started my slow decent. Down here, I knew, I would find what I was looking for. Solitude and Peace

✓ ✓ ✓

Is a hawk "graceful" as it loops?

Words carry their own emphasis

Seems fresh, except the "majestic" pines. Some excellent sensory words.

Peacefulness

(Low)

Revised

It's dark, the wind is blowing soft and sweet,
It sounds ~~as~~ like a breeze just passing through.
The sea is calm with little ripples in
the waves, the sky is dark blue and
clear with stars--thousands and millions
of stars--and I can see them all,
every last one. I hear cars.
One by one I hear them go by, they
sould like waves but there cars
going home after a late dinner.
Which is what I should be doing,
but it smells so nice, the soft
smell of the ocean breeze.

Some incomplete sentences or run-ons, but your sketch is poetic and very rhythmic. Do you write poetry, too?

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COMPOSITION ASSIGNMENT: AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL PORTRAIT

Richard Battaglia, Fairfax High School, Area E

Culminating our Advanced Placement English unit on the Bildungsroman, or developmental novel, is a writing project in which the student writes a chapter or episode of five to twenty pages about his/her own development. The student employs the organization, style, and/or narrative technique suggested by our class and outside reading.

More meaningful, I think, than a unit exam, the assignment is a welcome break from the usual expository analyses and provides the gifted student with an opportunity to demonstrate, through application, what has been learned of the aesthetics and approaches involved in his/her reading. Each student shares with many other students of the same age, a concern for the future, an examination of philosophy and values, and a new, more adult, view of position in the family. It is these areas that I--through the literature--suggest the student explore for material. I have found that the motivation is very high and that there is a great desire to do the personal material justice, both aesthetically and in honesty of statement. Since the material may be sensitive to the writer (I'm always surprised at the degree of painful honesty!), I reassure the students that absolutely no one else will see their work while it is in my hands. Also, I show how the authors we read always put an aesthetic "distance" between themselves as writer/analyst and themselves as protagonist/subject: changing the name of the characters, rearranging events, inventing incidents that are nevertheless true in spirit. Indeed, I make it clear that the student may fabricate everything, for that matter; certainly, the idea of the assignment is not to pry into one's private life.

As we begin the unit, I give a rough sketch to the students of the assignment and tell them that the questions we will encounter and explore in our reading are those they might consider in the writing of the assignment: Do conditions before birth determine the direction our personalities take? (Sons and Lovers.) What are our earliest recollections of our parents and how have these formed our current perceptions of ourselves and our ambitions? (Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man.) When, and under what circumstances or compulsions, did we first perceive ourselves as personalities distinct from parents or siblings? And how do historical and cultural crises shape what we become? (Demian.) These are but a few of the questions raised. Let me at this point assure the reader that the main focus of our discussions is on the literature itself, not on this assignment. As we discuss the various techniques of narration--for example, how is it appropriate that Lawrence begins his autobiographical novel with the story of his parents' marriage, as opposed to Joyce, who begins his novel with his earliest sensual memories; or, why is the stream of consciousness technique appropriate to some works but not others?--the student can determine the devices and techniques proper to his/her intentions.

I try not to be overly specific as to what they should write about. Many students, especially these gifted students who have made a successful career of it, ask how I would like to see the assignment. I attempt to impress upon

them that no one knows better than they what they should write about and how. One of the most rewarding aspects of the assignment, I tell them, is the discovery of the proper material and the method with which it should be told. Joyce's concept of the epiphany--that moment of transfiguring awareness--has been especially useful to students in providing them with a model for organization. Suggesting that the paper be formed around one or more of these epiphanies gives the student a starting point. Here is the actual wording of the assignment:

Write a well-planned "chapter" in your own "portrait of the young man/woman." The raw material of experience, formed around some epiphany or resolution, should be the content of your paper. Try to deal with the dynamics--or inner truth--of the situation, rather than the mere surface events, told in a straight narrative fashion. The reader, therefore, should be able to interpret those events according to your intentions. Select a method of narration that is appropriate and organic to your material and intentions.

The following was our reading schedule of last year, including a few of the books on the outside reading list. We augmented our class readings in the bildungsroman with autobiographical prose and poetry, along with three fine films obtained through gifted funds:

James Joyce, A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man
Hermann Hesse, Demian
Dylan Thomas, "Quite Early One Morning" and "Fern Hill"
Ingmar Bergman, "Cries and Whispers" (film)
Edna O'Brien, "Cords" (short story from her The Love Object)
Robert Anderson, "I Never Sang for My Father" (film)
D.H. Lawrence, Sons and Lovers (novel, film)
Marguerite Dorian, "Water Bucket" (story from The New Yorker)
Katherine Mansfield, "The Garden Party"

Outside reading included Marcel Proust, Swann's Way; Alain-Fournier, The Wanderer; Charles Dickens, David Copperfield; Henry Fielding, Tom Jones; Richard Wright, Native Son; Lawrence Sterne, Tristram Shandy; Saul Bellow, The Adventures of Augie March, and Michael Gold, Jews Without Money.

VALUES AND CREATIVITY IN COMPOSING

J. L. Jacobs, Area C Administrative Office

Much of the success involved in teaching composition comes from those assignments that appeal to the students' imagination and interest. Imaginative assignments allow students a chance to do some "role playing" in writing, use a variety of voices and writing for a variety of audiences. Values clarification assignments provide students with high-interest topics that produce a unique intellectual and emotional commitment on the part of the student. These assignments elicit flow in writing. Once the students are eagerly putting their ideas on paper, then the processes of organizing, shaping, and polishing can help refine the product.

The assignments that follow are a few of those presented for the ECLA Conference in January, 1976. They could be used as an interesting supplement to any English course offering. Values clarification exercises and creative writing assignments add extra variety and spice to any English course.

Many of the values clarification assignments rely on small-group discussions to allow students the opportunity to elaborate verbally on their particular position. Brainstorming for ideas and solutions, searching for alternatives, and analyzing consequences are all important components of the discussion experience that precedes the writing assignment. Through these experiences, students learn to clarify their values, elaborate on their thoughts, and organize their ideas either individually or as a group.

The journal is a valuable outlet for personal writing. Starter words given by the teacher often help the reluctant student get involved in the journal assignment. Some of the more effective starter words used are:

I often wish...
Wouldn't it be fun to...
Never again will I...
I never seem to...
What's the use of...

Each journal is different and provides both interesting and enjoyable reading. Teachers can add a special touch to the journal by having each student draw a time line at the top of each journal entry. The time line may extend from birth up to the student's present age. The student will then mark an "X" on the line, indicating when the incident took place. At the end of a quarter or the semester, the student can arrange the papers in chronological order by the time lines and have the nucleus for an autobiography.

The work of Art Daigon (Dig USA and Violence USA) has added to the teaching of imaginative and stimulating writing. His "real writing" allows the student a chance to write in a variety of voices for a variety of audiences. He uses human interest stories, cartoons, song lyrics, and a wealth of other popular media forms to involve students in their writing. "Real Writing" allows the students to write as if they were a major character in a story

they have read, a newspaper reporter, a parent, or anybody other than themselves. The students write the kind of literature they see most often: letters, news stories, editorials, prayers, telegrams, eulogies, diary entries, dialogues, etc. Art Daigon uses the ordinary in an imaginative and extraordinary way that really livens up the art of writing.

The use of pasted lines of type is also an imaginative way to tap student creativity. The teacher takes part of an ad (e.g., "You've Come a Long Way, Baby"), pastes it at the top of a blank piece of paper, and asks the students to complete the paragraph in a creative fashion. You'll always be surprised with what you get!

In working with Values Clarification: A Handbook (Simon, Howe, Kirschenbaum), the teacher has a wealth of ideas for the teaching of composition. Strategy No. 1, "Twenty Things You Love to Do," can provide a valuable inventory of student interests, hobbies, and beliefs. If compiled early in the semester, this record can greatly help the teacher individualize instruction and use student interest as a vehicle for learning. The assignment also provides a little self-analysis for the students and can help clarify whether they have simple or extravagant tastes, like to be alone or in a crowd, etc. It's a natural lead into the "I discovered that" or "I'm surprised that" personal writing assignment.

Strategy No. 7, "Value Survey," can be used with a class to help clarify values and analyze differences in values. The students fill out their own value survey and rank the eighteen values in order. Then the teacher assigns each student the task of administering the same survey to someone of a different sex, race, or age. The student can them compare and contrast the two differing value systems and write a comparison/contrast essay on the experience.

There are numerous passages in Values Clarification that allow students an opportunity to voice their opinion on an issue and make their position known. These exercises lend themselves easily to debates, class discussions, and group presentations.

These few assignments treat the composing process in an exciting and interesting way. The student's interests, values, and imagination are all actively involved in the writing experience.

F O C U S O N F I L M

Cynthia Takayama, Mount Gleason Junior High School, Area I

Encouraging students to write for films has proved to be a successful classroom activity. Yet, due to the expense involved, it is understandable why a number of teachers hesitate to use this highly motivating technique.

Jo Rogers and I, working with junior high school students of differing abilities, have found some relatively inexpensive ways of utilizing slides and filmstrips to generate composition. The student-produced film presentations have been on writing assignments such as descriptive paragraphs and short essays; original myths, fables, and folklore; short stories; autobiographical sketches; book reports; and poetry.

MAKING SLIDES

We have had students prepare their own slides in three ways. The most expensive, but also the most versatile and satisfactory of the three, is with a compact and portable piece of equipment, consisting of an automatic camera that can be attached to either of two different-sized stands fitted with special lenses for reproducing textbook and magazine pictures, original drawings, and three-dimensional objects in slide form. After the initial purchase price of the equipment, the expense lies primarily in the purchase and processing of the film used. This cost, however, can be minimized by limiting the number of shots students may use to illustrate their work or by using this type of production with group writing assignments.

Another way to make slides is with pre-cut and specially treated pressure film, which can be purchased in rolls of 100 and 500 slide-size sheets. The cost is minimal, and the only other materials needed are magazines, tongue depressors (or substitutes), scissors, and water.

The procedure is simple. (1) Browse through magazines and find slide-size pictures to illustrate a written assignment; (2) peel the pressure film off its waxed backing and place it, sticky side down, on a picture; (3) complete the ink transfer stage by firmly rubbing the entire surface of the film with a tongue depressor to remove all air pockets; (4) cut the film from the magazine and let it soak for about one minute, or until the paper comes loose; (5) carefully rub off any white chalky residue left on the back of the film, and rinse; (6) dry thoroughly and mount in a cardboard frame or on a clear plastic mount. The frames and mounts are inexpensive.

Clear contact paper can also be used to make slides with a procedure similar to that used for pressure film. The only differences are that the paper must be measured and cut to slide size and that warm, soapy water is needed for best results in the soaking process.

USING FILMSTRIPS

Students can illustrate their writing by drawing on filmstrips. Blank filmstrips can be provided in three ways: by purchasing specially processed film, by bleaching exposed 35mm film, and by using blank white bond paper or tracing paper.

Commercial Film

This is standard 35mm filmstrip material but with a specially treated blank surface on which students can write, draw, type, or erase as they would on paper. It can be purchased in rolls of 25, 100, or 1000 feet or in a kit that includes a 25-foot roll of film, colored markers, storage cans, labels, a splicing block, splicing tape, framing guides, a demonstration film, and a manual. It is less expensive when the roll of film is purchased by itself, because students can write on this type of film without using any special type of pen or pencil. The film is also marked so that the illustrator is aware of the space provided for each frame.

Bleached Film

Although students can use only felt-tip pens or more expensive instruments to draw on this type of film, it is an inexpensive way to provide filmstrips for student use.

To prepare the film for pupils, cut exposed 35mm film into strips of the desired length. Soak these strips in a solution of equal parts of bleach and hot water for approximately 10 minutes. Rub off any remaining residue and rinse the film in a solution of cold water. Allow the film to dry thoroughly.

The only additional material needed before drawing on the film is a premeasured guide for students to place under the filmstrip so that they are aware of the space allotted for each frame. Students can make their own, or a teacher can provide guides by duplicating several and then cutting them into individual strips. (See next section for details.)

Paper Filmstrips

Probably the least costly way to encourage writing by using film is through the following technique of making filmstrips with paper. The supplies needed are: a duplicating master, paper (white bond or tracing), scissors, ball-point pens (not felt-tip) of assorted colors, any transparent glue, 4- by 6-inch index cards (or any stiff paper), cooking oil, cleansing tissues, and cotton balls.

Procedure: (1) Mark off horizontal and vertical lines on a duplicating master, forming squares (frames) an inch square with 1/4-inch spaces running vertically between the frames. If tracing paper is used, students can do this measuring by themselves. (2) Run off the desired number of copies from the duplicating master and cut into vertical strips. One master will make enough copies for hundreds of filmstrips. (3) Illustrate whatever is desired with colored ball-point pens, being sure to begin and end with titles

and credits. Bold lines project best. (4) Cut index cards into strips 1 inch wide and 6 inches long. (5) Glue the index card or heavy paper to the top and the bottom of the filmstrip. (6) Before projecting the completed filmstrip, oil only the filmstrip (not the index card) on both sides with a cotton ball and remove excess oil with tissues.

The completed project may be projected on the screen by inserting the index card into the filmstrip projector and hand-feeding the strip through the projector as the narrative is given. To re-show a filmstrip of this type, simply re-oil and re-project.

The six types of film discussed here make it possible for almost anyone to use film to generate composition in the classroom, regardless of budget restrictions. With a little imagination, the use of slides and filmstrips can be adapted to a variety of writing situations. Whether students work on individual or group assignments, they all enjoy seeing the end-product of their composing efforts on the silver screen.

An excellent reference for the teacher interested in using film in the classroom is Jerrold E. Kemp's Planning and Producing Audiovisual Materials (Chandler Publishing Company). This text includes sections on the background of audio-visual communications, planning and preparing needed materials and equipment, and producing such materials as photographic print series, slides, filmstrips, tape recordings, overhead transparencies, and motion pictures. There are numerous illustrations and easily followed step-by-step instructions in each of these areas as well as in the development of fundamental skills for photography, graphics, and recording sound. For information on specific projects in which we have used slides and filmstrips, write to Cynthia Takayama at Mount Gleason Junior High School, Area I, or 10965 Mount Gleason Avenue, Sunland, CA 91040.

INDIVIDUALIZED INSTRUCTION OF COMPOSITION

Betty M. Bivins, Taft High School, Area L

Brief mention of individualized instruction in general may be useful before a discussion of its use in the specific field of composition. For, although some teachers have used individualized methods for a number of years, others haven't yet tried them. As one of the former, I've "individualized" everything from poetry to vocabulary work at one time or another over the past decade. And, from this experience, I have gained some answers to questions teachers often ask. To inquiries about what individualized instruction consists of, I first explain what it isn't, because of the misconceptions (some of them horrifying) that I've discovered exist. It isn't, for instance, a chaotic, howling mob "doing their own thing" while their teacher, earplugs securely in place, sits serenely reading a book. On the contrary, it is a highly structured form of teaching, demanding organization and intellectual discipline of both teacher and student. Nor is it necessarily even an entire class all studying different materials at the same time. Usually it is a matter of degree--part of the course work, partly individualized, part of the time--the exact extent dependent on at least three basic considerations: the kind of course, the maturity/skill levels of students, and the nature of the material to be studied.

A second question I am often asked has to do with the values of such instruction. There are many, but, to me, two stand out. One I refer to, for want of a more concise name, as variety-is-the-spice-of-life. And if simple variety doesn't somehow seem valid as an educational value, consider for a moment what boredom can do to destroy the best-planned lesson for both teacher and student! The other main value is concerned with vested interest. Whenever students are able to exercise some choice in what they study, or how they study it, or when they do a given assignment, they automatically have a vested interest in that material, an interest that almost always leads to more students getting actively involved in their own education, and greater learning for each one.

The third common question, about teacher work load, is important to already overburdened English teachers, to some of whom the idea of varied materials and procedures within the same class sounds like still more work. But it isn't. In the long run, it's probably about the same, although the distribution of teacher preparation time is quite different; a greater proportion is necessary before a unit begins, but considerably less once the work is under way. In some cases, this difference is unimportant. However, in composition, the area where I've found individualized instruction to be both easiest and most valuable, it can be an enormous advantage to student and teacher alike. Consider, for example, the alluring prospect of never again facing an entire class set of themes requiring detailed editing notes. Instead, you take home only three to five papers at a time! Or that, instead of burying yourself in period four's mound of papers while period five is busy producing another mound, you are free to help students in each class while they are writing.

Individualized instruction in composition begins, although most teachers don't think of it as such, with the personal comment a teacher writes on a student's theme. It can end as an open classroom, with no two students working on the same thing or at the same pace. But in between these extremes, remember, lies a vast range of interim possibilities, none calling for special knowledge, skill, or equipment for efficient use.

One of the most useful individualized writing assignments is the multi-level one, in which a single subject assigned to the entire class is developed differently according to the students' skill level. I was first driven to try this type of assignment when I faced an American Literature and Composition class composed of gifted, average, and remedial students. The subject was "advantages and disadvantages of procedures and materials used in our study groups." For the remedial level, the work consisted of an exercise in developing general ideas (statements) by specific details and examples. On duplicated sheets, this subject was broken down into a list of general statements (Example: There are some advantages to the procedures we use in our study groups), and students were to make a list of three or more specific examples that would illustrate each generality. This assignment also contained a section on organizing materials. For it, students chose one of the lists they had made and arranged the examples in several ways, according to their importance, their interest (to a reader), and their complexity.

For the average group, the assignment became an expository paragraph explaining the major advantages or disadvantages (not both!) of the materials or the procedures. These students, who could write on any one of four possible topics, had the greatest freedom of choice in the class. This was appropriate enough, since it is the average group, I've discovered, that is usually the most easily bored. For the advanced students, who had already mastered the single-paragraph essay and had had some instruction on the short theme with the thesis statement introduction, the assignment was to write a two-paragraph theme explaining major advantages and disadvantages of both the materials and the procedures. And though these students had no choice of subject, they did have some choice in the way they organized their papers.

The working time needed by the three groups was approximately the same, although the advanced students had the "privilege" of revising their papers at home if they wished. Predictably, many exercised that option. My work called for three duplicated assignment-instruction pages to be prepared before the work began. And simple mathematics suggests that in this instance my work load was therefore three times greater. Not so! Rather than plowing through 30 or so themes, some so poorly done as to defy reading, I checked 12 exercises (in about 10 minutes), made revision notations on 8 single paragraphs, and did extensive commentary on only 10 themes. Further, and perhaps the source of greatest satisfaction to me throughout the two-day writing period, my time went to the students who needed the most help. There was a distinct improvement in classroom atmosphere, too--not to the extent of wild hilarity, of course, for few students are joyful at the prospect of the hard work and thought necessary for composition. But notably lacking was the air of gloom and sometimes almost explosive sense of frustration that can accompany composition work.

My last example of individualized composition instruction, included to show the extent possible under certain circumstances, is of a sequence I use regularly in Advanced Composition, a course taken by twelfth graders with at least a B average in an academic major. During the first half of the semester, I conduct regular class sessions without any individualized instruction. At this time, students concentrate on three kinds of work:

1. Building a fund of knowledge about several broad subjects that they choose for themselves

2. Writing a few short themes "in common" (enumeration by details or examples, enumeration by reasons, and comparison and contrast)

3. Developing certain expository skills, such as the use of specifics to illustrate; use of genuine logic or evidence to support assertions (as opposed to generalities supported by hot air!); and use of smooth transitions.

Then, at midterm, there is a drastic change. Students receive a detailed, two-page set of instructions for individual writing, containing explicit information on requirements for the number and kinds of themes, due dates, record keeping, time limits (some work must be done on a restricted time schedule), editing assistance available, and procedures for conferences and turning in papers. I then conduct a question and answer period, during which students receive a grounds pass and an explanation of the privileges, conditions, and penalties for misuse that go with it. They also receive information about other duplicated sheets, available as and if needed, that contain information on the kinds of papers they will be writing--problem solving, cause and effect, simple and multiple analysis, etc.. At that point, for all practical purposes the class disbands and students go their own way.

And what am I doing besides sitting in an empty classroom twirling my thumbs? Perhaps a direct quote from the student instruction sheet can best explain:

> Within each 50-minute class period there will be three 15-minute blocks of time. The first of these (see schedule posted on bulletin board), labeled Free Time, is set aside for the instructor to give special directions, take attendance, answer quick questions informally, or check Cover Sheets for themes in the planning stage. The other two 15-minute blocks are Conference Periods A and B, available on a first-come, first-served basis but with sign-ups in advance, please. Conferences may be used for a number of purposes: to go over a prospective theme idea; to work on a specific writing problem, such as wordiness, organization, or development; to discuss merits or weak spots in a paper already revised and graded; or any other purpose desired except the vague one of having the instructor "look over the rough copy." That kind of assistance is given through the overnight editing available (by signing the sheet in the editing folder) at the rate of three papers a day.

A little simple arithmetic will yield some interesting information. In a class of 25 students, the teacher can hold an individual, 15-minute conference with every student once each two and a half weeks (10 a week). And, at the rate of three papers a day, the same teacher can give detailed editing and commentary to one theme for every student each two weeks! Since all students do not need this much help, then, as in the case of the multi-level assignment, more assistance goes to those who need it and both teacher and student time are used more efficiently--an advantage I have found present in all individualized composition work I have done.

COMPOSITION: DEVELOPING IDEAS BY SPECIFIC DETAILS AND EXAMPLES

Instructions

A. The statements listed below are general ones, some or all of which apply to the study groups used in this class. The words and phrases that identify them as general (rather than specific) are underlined.

B. Copy the statements assigned to you--or the ones you have chosen, if you have free choice--onto your own paper. Indented under each statement, list (as a., b., etc.) at least three specific examples or kinds of details that would serve as illustrations, support, or demonstrations of the general idea contained in that statement.

Statements

1. There are some advantages (strengths) to the questions we use in our study groups.

2. There are some disadvantages (weaknesses) to the questions used in the study groups.

3. The procedures followed by the study groups have certain advantages (strengths).

4. The study group procedures present some problems for the students who use them.

5. My first study group (or second study group) was a good one in a number of ways.

6. In my_____study group we ran into a number of difficulties.

Organization

Choose one of the lists you have made, and rearrange the examples or details it contains according to each of the suggestions listed below that fits your particular list. (Don't worry if some of your "arrangements" turn out to be the same; that is possible when an example that is most important, for instance, also happens to be the most interesting and therefore appears in the same position on two different arrangements.)

A. In the order of their importance; least to most

B. In the order of their interest (to a reader); same

C. In the order of their frequency of occurrence; same

D. In the order of their difficulty; same

COMPOSITION: ONE PARAGRAPH

A. Topic

Write a one-paragraph composition (100 to 200 words in length) in which you explain the major strengths OR weaknesses of ONE of the following:

1. The questions used in the study groups

2. The procedures used in the study groups

3. One of the study groups you have actually worked with so far

B. Instructions

1. Complete the Plan Sheet and have it checked by the instructor. It is due_____.

2. When your Plan Sheet has been approved, it will receive a double check mark (✓✓). Then go ahead and write the rough copy (RC) of your paragraph, as follows:

   a. Follow your writing instructions, please!

   b. Remember to develop each point (sub-topic) with specific details and/or examples to illustrate what you are trying to communicate to your reader.

   c. The RC is due_____.

3. When the RC is returned to you (after about a week), revise it and produce a final copy (FC) according to the suggestions contained in the revision symbols and marginal comments. When it is finished, turn it in together with the RC and the original Plan Sheet. It is due_____.

THEME: STUDY GROUPS

Subject

Write a two-paragraph theme (200 to 400 words in length) in which you explain the strengths and weaknesses of both the materials (questions) and the procedures of your first two study groups.

Organization of Paper

A close look at the subject as it is stated above will show you that there are three different ways of arranging (organizing) your paper. Use whichever one of the three you prefer.

Procedure

1. First, write a Cover Sheet and turn it in for checking. Be sure to follow the form exactly as it was given to you; otherwise, it will have to be rewritten.

2. Then, when the Cover Sheet has been approved (✓✓), write the rough copy (RC) of your theme. Follow the writing instructions you have already received. When completed, turn in the RC for editing help. The due date for the RC is as follows:_____.

3. When the RC is returned to you, revise it carefully according to the suggestions given in the revision symbols and marginal comments. When the final copy (FC) is finished, turn it in with the Cover Sheet and the original RC. The due date for the FC is as follows: _____.

ADVANCED COMPOSITION: PROCEDURES FOR INDIVIDUAL INSTRUCTION

A. The Assignment

1. Write five papers on your own, between now and the end of the semester.

2. These papers will consist of one of each of the following:

   a. Comparison and contrast

   b. Problem solving

   c. Cause/effect chain of logic

   d. Simple analysis

   e. Multiple analysis

3. Although the methods of development specified in 2. are listed roughly in an ascending order of complexity, you do not need to write them in that order. (Choice of method will probably be determined, in part at least, by which subject you write on at any given time; in part, it may depend on what interests you at a particular moment.)

4. Three of the five papers--any three--must be written entirely in third person. Of course, all papers are to maintain a consistent point of view.

5. For a grade of C or better and satisfactory marks in work habits and cooperation, all papers must be completed within the time periods set.

B. Due Dates

1. The due dates, which will be given in advance, will be approximately seven school days apart. One paper must be completed within each such writing period and, except for genuine emergencies, must be completed by the last writing day of each period.

2. The last of the five papers will be due--without exception short of a full-scale emergency--no later than Monday of the 19th week of the semester. For this semester, that date is as follows: _____.

3. Remember that it is advisable to establish a writing schedule that allows a cooling period of several days between the writing of the RC and its revision. Because of this, you may delay the writing of the FC of any paper until the week following. (This may mean, of course, that two papers will have to be turned in during that particular week)

C. Notes On Timing

1. Two of the papers--any two you prefer--are to be written at school under a time limitation set by the instructor. You inform me when you wish to do one of these; I will then set up a writing schedule with you.

2. For the other three papers, there is no particular limitation on time except that each must be done within one of the writing periods. These three may be written at school or at home or both. Schedule your time as you like.

3. For all papers, it is your job to decide on the writing days and due date within each writing period. This information is be

recorded in advance on your Writing Record Card and strictly adhered to unless there is some good reason to change it. (Two

4. When you are writing a paper under a time limitation, please observe the following procedure:

   a. Turn in your RC every day at the end of the class period. (If you are working somewhere other than in the classroom, this means you must return at the end of the period.)

   b. When you have completed the RC, be sure to turn it in and leave it with me until you are ready to write the FC. Both RC and FC are to be completed on the dates previously set by you and the instructor.

5. Remember that the writing periods are each about seven days. Each paper is likely to require from three to five of those days, depending on its length and whether or not you are writing under a time limit. This means there is room for some flexibility of writing schedules. If you schedule yourself so that your papers are always due on the last day of each writing period, then you may discover that you are working under at least two possible disadvantages:

   a. If something does happen (illness, for instance), you run the risk of turning a paper in late.

   b. Too many people may want editing help or conference time on the same two or three days for the instructor to be able to handle the work. This may result in failure to get help when it is needed. (See below for amount of assistance available.)

D. Assistance Available

1. To qualify for any kind of assistance, your papers must observe all the conventions of form previously set in this class. These include such matters as correct headings, use of ink, margins, titles, writing on every other line, numbering pages, etc.

2. The amount of help given is up to you within the limits specified below. Try not to be an extremist; either too much or too little help is a disadvantage to you.

3. Within each class period (50 minutes) there will be three 15-minute blocks of time. The first of these (see schedule posted on board) will be labeled Free Time and is for the instructor to give special instructions and/or answer quick questions informally for all who request this time. The other two 15-minute blocks are Conference Periods (A and B), available as follows:

   a. Sign up in advance, please. The time is available on a first-come, first-served basis.

b. Sign for one conference period at a time, please; don't try to get two or three conferences in a row!

c. Once signed up for a conference, show up for it on time. Conference appointments are not to be broken except in case of absolute necessity, and then at least two days in advance. (Since time is, after all, limited, it is unfair to sign for time and not use it; someone else may need it!)

4. In addition to the class conference time, the instructor will accept up to three papers a day for overnight assistance--editing, commenting, etc. This, too, will be arranged by advance sign-up on a first-come, first-served basis. Again, do not take up a space and then not use it, except, of course, because of illness or other good reason.

5. Duplicated sheets showing organizational patterns and other information will be issued for each method of development not previously discussed in class.

NOTES ON ORGANIZATION OF THE PROBLEM-SOLVING PAPER

General Information

1. Since the purpose of the paper is to offer solutions (or a complex, multi-step or multi-part single-solution), the entire main body of the paper should be devoted to explaining the solutions; the problem itself is to be presented in the introductory paragraph.

2. Avoid large, international problems unless you are quite well informed.

3. Be careful to limit your subject.

4. Be sure you can develop each paragraph (solution or part of one) with a reasonable amount of specific evidence: facts, logic, etc. That is, take care to offer the reader solutions that are reasonably valid.

Basic Organization

Paragraph 1: Introduction

a. Statement of the problem

b. Establishment of the problem, if necessary, as
(1) real
(2) important
(3) relevant to the reader

c. Overview of the purpose of the paper, the method of organization of the paper, and of the parts of the solution or the different solutions to be offered.

d. Any background information, orgins, or previous attempts to solve the problem that are necessary for the reader to know about.

Paragraphs 2, 3, 4, Etc. (Body)

a. Statement of the solution or the part of it to be discussed in this one paragraph.

b. Information on how to make the solution work or how to put it into effect

c. Its effectiveness as a solution

d. If desired, definitions of necessary technical terms

Final Paragraph: Conclusion

a. Summary of the points presented

b. Comparison of the solutions (or parts of the solution) to each other in terms of their relative validity, importance, practicality, etc.

c. Concluding statement as to which solution (or part) is "best" and which is "worst" according to circumstances and people involved.

Some Possible Subjects

1. Drug use (abuse)
2. Pollution (air, earth, water)
3. Overpopulation
4. Rapid transit for Los Angeles
5. Cheating in school
6. Grading systems in school
7. Student unrest
8. Civil rights
9. School spirit